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Custody/Parenting Time Evaluation Procedures

Step 1. A copy of the court order for the custody evaluation and any existing court-ordered custody and parenting time arrangements are obtained.

Step 2. Each parent downloads and completes the forms listed below. Forms can also be faxed or mailed to the parents.

- Informed Consent
- List of Involved Parties
- Background
- Consent for Services to Child(ren)
- Child Information Form
- List of Collateral Contacts

The forms can be returned to our office when the parent appears for the face-to-face portion of the evaluation, or they can be returned sooner by fax, mail, or email attachment. They *must* be received before the face-to-face portion of the assessment begins.

Step 3 (often coinciding with Step 2). Appointments are set for each parent to be evaluated with the child(ren). Each parent will come to the office with the child(ren). The contesting parents will not be scheduled on the same day. If a parent has a cohabitating partner, that person schedules a *separate* appointment and the child does not need to appear with the cohabitating partner.

Step 4. Evaluations are conducted for each parent. These evaluations typically take 5 – 7 hours. The parents usually submit any documents they deem relevant at this appointment, but relevant documents will be accepted after the appointment. Releases are obtained to contact teachers, physicians, therapists, etc. who may have relevant information. In most cases, each parent will complete:

- a standard clinical interview
- the Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence – Second Edition
- the comprehension subtest of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – Fourth Edition
- the Parent Relationship Questionnaire
- Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory - 2

- MMPI-2-RF and MCMI-III
- The Rorschach Inkblot Test
- observed interactions with the child(ren) involving a structured cooperative task provided by the evaluator

Cohabiting partners are also evaluated and are usually administered only a standard clinical interview, the MMPI-2-RF, and the Adult-Adolescent Parenting Inventory - 2.

In addition:

- Each child who is verbally and developmentally competent to offer relevant and reliable information (usually six years old and above) is individually administered a standard clinical interview. We are very sensitive to the precarious position of the child during this process. The child is always treated with warmth and reassurance, and will not be subjected to questions that would be expected to significantly raise his or her anxiety level.
- Each child age six or older is administered the Bricklin Perceptual Scales
- Older children may undergo additional assessment if questions remain unanswered.

Step 5. The evaluator determines which collateral informants to contact. Collateral phone contacts are completed during this time.

Step 6. Once all data has been collected, a report is written that summarizes the findings and provides specific recommendations for custody, parenting time, and any other issues that impact the psychological well-being of the child(ren).

Step 7. The report is released to each parent's attorney.

Step 8. The evaluating psychologist remains available to the attorneys to clarify statements in the report; answer questions about the procedures, findings, and recommendations; and if necessary to appear in court to answer questions about the evaluation.